

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN WORLD WAR II VETERANS ON THE 47TH ANNIVERSARY OF PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S SIGNING OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 9981

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 1995

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, July 26, 1995 marks the 47th anniversary of President Harry S. Truman's signing of Executive Order 9981, officially desegregating the U.S. military. I rise to pay special tribute and to extend my profound gratitude not only to President Truman but to the African-American men and women who served in World War II and whose exemplary service made the President's action all but inevitable, as President Clinton reminded us in his courageous stand in defense of affirmative action. The military institution that grew out of that executive order became the model for the society as a whole. The U.S. military is our finest example of equality, opportunity, upward mobility, and full inclusion in our social institutions.

As chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus veterans braintrust and a Korean war veteran, I want to express my sincere appreciation for the dedication of those men and women who fought for democracy abroad against the Nation's common enemy and returned home to battle racism and discrimination. During the war, this duality was signified by black troops as the double "V" campaign.

Last year following the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Normandy invasion, I heard many complaints from African-American veterans, including my constituents in New York. In all of the pageantry, in all of the television coverage, it seemed they had been left out. I took the matter up with President Clinton and Secretary Jesse Brown. The result was President Clinton's participation in a Presidential tribute where he delivered a moving speech during the 24th Annual Congressional Black Caucus legislative weekend. The President's appearance was coordinated by the CBC veterans braintrust, as part of a special tribute entitled "D-Day and World War II African-American Veterans: The Forgotten Heroes and Heroines."

The tribute honored the 1 million African-American men and women in uniform during the war, including the nearly 750,000 who served overseas in Europe and the Pacific. The President's decision to attend the veterans braintrust event was an honor that cannot be ignored or forgotten.

The President was joined at the event by Secretary Jesse Brown, and CBC members: SANFORD BISHOP, JR., BOBBY RUSH, MAXINE WATERS, CORRINE BROWN, JAMES CLYBURN, KWEISE MFUME, former Congressman Charles Diggs, and was witnessed by a capacity audience in the Ways and Means Committee room.

President Clinton described the African-American World War II veterans as "a distin-

guished generation in the history of African-American military service." As a group, he said they were protectors "of a legacy older than the Declaration of Independence; one that includes the legendary service of the Massachusetts 54th in our Civil War, the Buffalo Soldiers in the West, the 92d Division in World War I."

The President continued, "For decades, African-American veterans were missing in our Nation's memories of World War II. For too long, you were soldiers in the shadows, forgotten heroes. Today it should be clear to all of you, you are forgotten no more."

While African-American veterans fought and died under the stigma of segregation, one thing is clear: their heroic contributions in WWII marked the beginning of the end of segregated America. The bottom line is that the brilliance of their performance in the war forced President Truman to sign Executive Order 9981, on July 26, 1948, ending the practice of segregation in the military. The performance of African-Americans in World War II sowed the seeds that ultimately forced the Federal Government to reexamine its policies on race and stimulated African-Americans to greater activism in demanding their rights.

The Presidential awards ceremony honored outstanding World War II African-American veterans associations, units, and individuals who served with distinction, as well as historical organizations who continue to educate the public on the role and contribution of African-Americans in World War II.

Sixty awards were presented to the following honorees: Montford Point Marines Association, Prometheans, 715th Veterans Association, U.S.S. Mason (DE 529) Association, 366th Veterans Association, Black Women Army Auxiliary Corp./Women Army Corp. & Women in the Services, 372nd Infantry Association, 758th/64th Armored Regiment Association, 92nd Infantry Division Association, 761st Tank Battalion & Allied Veterans Association, 366th Veterans Association, Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., World War II Black Veterans of the Great Lakes, U.S. Coast Guard National Association of Former Stewards & Stewardmates, Inc., 555th Parachute Infantry Association, 369th Veterans Association, the Golden Thirteen, the 5th Platoons and the Red Ball Express, Dr. Paul Parks, Sr., Waverly Woodson Jr., SSgt. Monroe Blackwell, Willie Woods, Claude Owens, Rev. Elmer Fowler, Charity Adams-Earley, Dr. Martha Putney, Lt. Col. Julius Williams, Gladstone Dale, Dr. Leroy Ramsey, Donald Eaton, Jr., Samuel Phillips, Alonzo Swann, Captain Hugh Mulzac (Posthumously), Leroy Colston, Major Nancy Leftenant-Colon, Clark Simmons, Dr. Robert Allen, Robert Routh, Lt. Col. Jesse Johnson, Jacob Johnson III, Dr. Emerson Emory, Dr. Charles Pinderhughes, Samuel Mildrew, Captain David Williams, Sr., 1st Lt. Prudence Burns Burrell, Lt. Col. Bradley Biggs, Major Augustus Hamilton, John Carter, James Dockery, Dr. Howard Mitchell, Charles Evers, Dr. Roscoe Brown, Percy Sutton, Daisy Winifred Byrd-Beldon, Jean Byrd Stewart, Col.

Margaret Bailey, Edna Young Shannon, Dr. Olivia Hooker, Dr. Howard Mitchell, SSgt. Robert Powell, John Silveria, Dr. John Garrett, World War II Heritage Commission, Committee for the Aviation Mural Project Success, and Black Military History Institute of America.

Again, on behalf of a grateful nation, I speak for the Congressional Black Caucus in expressing our deep appreciation for the contributions, dedication, commitment, and national service of the African-American men and women who served in World War II. Their job was done well, and will forever be remembered.

HONORING GILBERT RONSTADT

HON. ED PASTOR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 26, 1995

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, many knew Gilbert Ronstadt only as Linda Ronstadt's father. However, those who knew him well remember him as a man who embodied the values of love of country, family, and community.

Born in 1911, before Arizona had become a State, Gilbert Ronstadt devoted his energies to helping shape Tucson into the vibrant and expanding city it is today. As a young man, he entertained many in his native town with his wonderful voice by singing on the radio, in nightclubs and theater stages around town. His love for mariachi music lived on in his family and was later immortalized through his daughter's now famous "Canciones De Mi Padre" album.

After serving his country during World War II, he returned to Tucson to head the family hardware business. Throughout his life, his family responsibilities always received a high priority. Gilbert Ronstadt also showed a strong devotion for his community and its cultural heritage. He actively participated in the development and revitalization of downtown Tucson and served on numerous boards, including the Chamber of Commerce, the Tucson Trade Bureau, and the Arizona State Society. He was also active in helping establish trade relations between Mexico and the United States.

An unassuming and simple man, Gilbert Ronstadt will be remembered in the community for his selflessness, the longlasting impact of his work in the community, and his farreaching pride in his culture and traditions. He leaves behind a legacy of goodwill and inspiration for those who choose the pillars of service and family as their sources of happiness. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of a great man.

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